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THE

Life Mission.



BY

J. W. ELLIS, A. M.

ST. LOUIS:

CHAS. E. WARE & CO., PRINTERS.

1876.



THE
LIFE MISSION.

John BY *William*
J. W. ELLIS.

READ AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT OF
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, COLUMBIA, MO.

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DEDICATION.

As a feeble expression of his appreciation of their intellectual culture and taste, these lines are respectfully dedicated to THE YOUNG LADIES OF CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, for whose pleasure and entertainment they were written by
THE AUTHOR.



PROEM.

The inspiration of this poem is drawn from that beautiful Shawnee legend, "The Celestial Sisters." The entire tradition is not attempted here ; indeed, there is some doubt if it is to be recognized at all ; but as a rising mist may direct the eye above the clouds—above itself, to contemplate the sky ; it has done good service—it has pointed where to look.



THE LIFE MISSION.

GRANT, Warder of the upper skies,
My muse, aspiring, safe may rise
From this dull earth and all its blight
To yon bright plain, where comes nor night,
Nor warring hosts, nor treacherous foe,
Nor dark, ill-omened rivers flow ;
Where cheating visions never come
To mar a pure, ethereal home.

Plain of the stars ! bright home of life !
Away from earth, away from strife !
Nor mortal's pain nor mortal's care
Infects the clear elysium there.
Thy sparkling floor, so richly made,
With glowing, clustering stars inlaid,
That who thy glories shall behold
Must know thy beauty ne'er was told.
Above thy face the cloudless sky
Of thy unbounded purity
Spreads, bending with a faultless line
Of beauty and of grace divine.

Plain of the stars ! where yet resound
In sweetest cadence, swelling round
Those choral symphonies, whose birth
Long antedates the globe of earth !
Sweet echoes of that grand refrain,
Once heard when angels joined the strain,
Which first the stars sang, praising God,
Made vocal this divine abode.
Plain of the stars ! bright home of life !
Free of the ills on earth so rife ;
Here may the soul find endless day,
And, drinking of life's fountain, may
In this bright home be ever blest,
Nor passion's storms disturb its rest ;
And reaching forward to perfection,
With wondrous powers at its election,
May rise in love till it may sit
Down close akin to the Infinite.

This plain, at times like burnished gold,
At times like silver map unrolled,
Thick set with starry diadems,
At all times glowing with its gems,
And yet so soft, so smooth and sweet,
You'd press it e'en with naked feet—
Was never tame, monotonous,
In joys, delights, so marvelous.
Beyond this beauteous plain, arose
Bright waving forests, which enclose
Oft-time the most enchanted lakes,

About whose waters all partakes
Of fascination, weird and strange ;
And still beyond, a mountain range,
Retreating in the distance far
With every peak set with a star,
That sheds its light and silver sheen
O'er sides and vales of waving green—
How plentiful, and what the game,
It were an endless task to name.

Whose'er the imagination be,
And borne on wings however free,
Will find that clime supremely fair,
With which there's nothing can compare.
The mind's ideal will be reflected,
And all that is with it connected,
With all the great wants of the soul
Will there be found, for these control
The very aspirations given,
To lead the heart to seek a heaven.
No matter how uncouth the race,
Yet will it have some perfect place,
As it perfection understands,
Where rivers flow o'er golden sands,
Where peace forever, white-winged dove,
Flies with the olive branch and love.

As floats an island in the tide,
Surrounded by such borders wide,
This starry plain swims in the blue

Of the Infinite, as if it drew
Its wondrous life from such a store.
A blooming spring forevermore
Those borders, far extending, bless ;
While over it pure happiness
Forever smiles, imparting cheer
And life immortal held so dear.

Upon this star-gemmed floor 's imposed
A noiseless ocean, undisclosed
To common sight, whose currents run
Like scattered flood-light from the sun—
Nor so discernible—whose tide
Can never fail, can ne'er subside.
This ocean is of life the source—
Is life itself, and from which course
The vivifying streams that give
All hope and life to all that live.
This ocean has no weight to press
On that fair plain—is fathomless—
And no obstruction, shore to shore,
To those who walk that studded floor,
It e'er presents.

Its flowing tide
Spreads equally on every side,
And flowing over onward moves
O'er lakes and mountains, plains and groves,
Within whose depths the forests green,
The mountain peaks and plains serene,

That at their base reposing lie,
Breathe life and immortality.
No dead leaves fall, for none are dead ;
No trees grow old ; and it is said
The very game that's shadowed there,
For which the spirit hunters care,
May serve their aim, but die no more
On that exhaustless life-wrought shore.

Invisibly, the floods descend
From Life's great reservoir and wend
Their silent way adown the sky,
Or else the very earth would die ;
And, flowing over every clime,
All generations and all time,
Would, but for parts of grosser worth
Which so corrupt that primal birth,
Bestow eternal life on earth ;
But as it is, here's ever strife
Betwixt the foe and friend of life ;
And so the heart is led to know
These waters must somewhere o'erflow—
Somewhere must be eternal day,
Where life is all in all for aye.

The waters flowing from that fount
Must be unseen, for senses blunt
By weak mortality and sin
Cannot discern them. Thus shut in,
Our rising souls must seek to explore

Life's fountain on some other shore.
We cannot know just how they come—
Those waters from that fountain home ;
They may, as from the northern chain
Of lakes, by subterranean drain,
Flow out as those great waters flow,
Replenishing a world below.

'Tis never noon, or morn, or night
On that star-plain : continuous light
Forever streams its constant flood.
The Father of all life and good
Has so decreed it with a vow,
And made it one eternal Now.
But how were this of life the realm,
Did leaden silence overwhelm
And shadow it with her dull wings?
Then, like a harp with well tuned strings,
O'er which no fingers ever sweep—
On which the softest zephyrs sleep,
Without vibration to molest
The latent harmony at rest ;
Observing *that*, such aching void—
With all its beauties thus alloyed—
The heart could but observe and sigh,
And restless, wish the want supply ;
As one must *this*, impatient see,
And wondering if its harmony
Can be aroused,—restrained by fear,—
Longs but a single note to hear.

But 'tis not so. The very streams
Of life-waves, meeting with the beams
Of light resplendent, there unite
And yield sweet strains of rare delight.
Now, floating as if borne from far,
Or, wafted from some distant star,
Come softened melodies of song,
Which falling, rising, now prolong
The heart's desire to drink still more,
And catch each word, though heard before.

SONG.—(Chorus of voices.)

O Father of Life! How the beams
Of life and of light ever streams
On our hearts, reflecting the gleams
That come from Thy wondrous pavilion
Like whisperings of angels they fall
So sweetly, they never can pall,
And cast they a hue over all
From golden to softest vermilion!

The joys they give, what a treasure!
Here, tripping, we dance to the measure
Of life-waves, that beat in their pleasure,
Till resonant plain and the mountain.
No wonder we live here forever,
Where smiles of the Father are never
Withdrawn. O bountiful Giver,
Of such inexhaustible fountain!

But list to the echo afar,
Of rich melody, star unto star
Is repeating, and never a jar
 Interrupts the soft cadences falling ;
Like voices of angels to praise
Thee, Father of life, and always
These we would reflect in our lays,
 In answering strains to them calling.

Then vocal be mountain and plain !
Our own merry hearts in the strain
Shall join, and the joyous refrain
Shall be wafted o'er mountain and main
 In continuous reverberation ;
For Thou art the beginning and end,
In whom all life and love blend,
Which, given so freely, commend
Every heart in cheerfulness bend
 To Thee, and award exaltation.

A magic circle in the plain,
From which we've heard the floating strain,
Seems pressed down in the golden floor,
From which the floods of light up-pour,
Resplendent more than Fancy's dream.
'Twould seem as if continuous stream
Of well-timed feet, for cycles past,
Had by continual pressing cast
This impressed circle in the gold ;
For round and round the wondrous mold,

Emblazoned round with jeweled sides,
O'er which life streams with buoyant tides,
A wondrous band with flying feet,
Chase one another, while they beat
On silvery balls, and music sweet
Flows through the perforations made,
Far sweeter than might be essayed
By mortal, or by poet's fire ;
On harp or on Æolian lyre.
Now ever and anon they stand
As waiting signal or command,—
Reverse their course, exchanging place,—
The hindmost then, now leads the chase,
And now, uniting in some strain,
Send choral echoes 'cross the plain.
Sometimes they sat upon the marge,
Like graces of the ring in charge,
And answering in alternate lay,
Sang joyously the time away :

Through groves would you wander,
Like shaded ones yonder,
To sit, dream, or ponder
Of moments of bliss?
Is there not a seeming
Of joy when thus dreaming,
Where light is less beaming,
That's found not in this?

When thus sang one, who loved to rove

And seek the beauties of the grove,
Or else recline beneath its shade,
Or hasten through the opening glade—
When from the ring's opposing side,
One questioned thus, one thus replied :

Oh yes ; 't were delighting,
Where nothing is blighting—
Where nothing needs righting,
To sing of such bliss !
But here, where the flowing
Of life-beams bestowing
All, all that's worth knowing,
Much better is this !

Continue all the wakened lay,
And sing as inclination may,
Be uppermost through choice or play.

First Voice.

Oh, give me the grove,
Where the vines ever move
In the zephyrs they love—
What moments of bliss !

Second Voice.

Oh, give me this ring,
Where the joys of life bring
Sweet delights, while we sing—
What pleasure is this !

Third Voice.

To me, give the floor
Of this burnished plain o'er
To fly evermore—
What moments of bliss!

Fourth Voice.

For me, let my wings
Voice, as musical strings,
The song that life sings,—
What pleasure were this!

Fifth Voice.

For me, let my heart
Forever share part
Of emotions which start
From moments of bliss.

Sixth Voice.

For me, I shall cherish
No hopes that shall perish,—
Life ever shall flourish
In pleasures like this.

Seventh Voice.

For me, let the flowing
Of waves of life, going,
Forever bestowing
Such moments of bliss.

Eighth Voice.

For me, let the swelling
Of strains of love, telling
The blessing of dwelling
'Mid pleasures like this.

Ninth Voice.

For me, thus reclining
On life, where's no pining,
How was there divining,
Such moments of bliss?

Tenth Voice.

For me, give the being
That never needs freeing,
Blessed ever with seeing
Such pleasure as this!

Eleventh Voice.

For me, I would bear
The life we have here,
That others might share
Such moments of bliss.

Twelfth Voice.

For me, I would dare,
Should the Father declare,
Go to earth—take it there,
What pleasure were this!

And wafted o'er the distant plain,
The mountain sides repeat the strain,
The band all joined the glad refrain,
And sang as single voice again :

For us we would dare,
Should the Father declare,
Go to earth—take it there,
What pleasure were this !

The strain was borne far o'er the tide,
And angel voices, far and wide,
Took up the soul-enrapturing song,
Till it engaged the mighty throng
Of all the countless hosts above,
In wondrous symphony of love.
Well pleased, the Father smiled to hear
The song that greets his listening ear,
And beckoning with uplifted hand,
Deep silence reigned. The wondering band,
Attentive all, He thus addressed:
“Ye happy daughters, far more blessed
Above all others, children mine,
Whose very song is made divine
By sacrifice that you must make,
When, for a time you would forsake
These happy plains, unknown to strife,
That you may bear immortal life,
To yonder darkling, sin-cursed sphere,—
To give it smiles of love and cheer.

Such purpose and such high resolve
Have long been mine to cause devolve
On you the mission, long desired,
Declared by you, by me inspired.

“If one pulsation is more blest,
Or made more holy than the rest,—
If one emotion in the breast
Is purer and appears to be
More near the heart of Deity,
'Tis that born of philanthropy.
The heart, that shall resolve to go,
And bear some soothing balm for woe,—
Relieve the suffering and distressed,
Shall be remembered 'mong the blest.
The darkness that enwraps a world,
May be dispelled ; and, pure as hurled,
It may by heaven's beams be bright,
Imparting joy and sweet delight
To every soul that would not die,
Desiring immortality.

“Life shall be offered—shall be free ;
But not imposed, and therefore, he,
Who shall elect this grace to have,
Shall have the power himself to save ;
But who rejects it, he shall die
To God and love eternally !
Thus, man shall have his destiny
Based on his own free agency.

Since mine it is this life to give,
Should he not hasten to receive?—
Comply with all of him required,
And prove some worth the gift desired?"

"O Father of all Mercy!" cried
The listening host, "is man so dear,
Of whom thou speak'st on yonder sphere,
That thou hast nothing him denied;
That he, exalted and forgiven
May claim an entrance into heaven?"

"Yea, even so; for scarce beneath
Your own creation did I breathe
The breath of life into his soul,
And left within his own control
Its purity.

In evil hour,
He so abused the granted power,
That, in transgression, he bequeathed
The wound which he himself received
To all his race. Death passed on all,
And spreading wide his darkened pall,
Has shadowed e'en the spark divine,
Which shone erst almost bright as thine;
But he so wandered, groped his way
From life immortal, that some ray
Proceeding from the great white throne
On which I sit—such ray alone
Can lead him back, permit he may

Return to everlasting day.
This light have you assumed to bear
To yon dark earth, if I declare?"

Again, the chorus sang assent,
Rejoicing with the glad intent
To speed away, in instant flight,
And penetrate the shades of night,
Emerging in the world below,
To banish all its pain and woe ;
And thus repeating, thus they sang,
And sweet again the pæan rang:

“ For us we would dare,
Should the Father declare,
Go to earth—take it there.
What pleasure were this ! ”

The Father said, “ Yet know before
Ye go, this one condition more:
With your divinity shall be
United man’s humanity ;
That thus this light through it shall shine,
Reflect on him some ray divine,
Which shall influence and control
And purify his *willing* soul.
Else, might your plane appear too high
His soul-wants ever to supply ;
And, so, the offered gift refuse,
Which thus presented he may choose.”

The chorus band acceptance made
Of all condition on them laid,
And haste rejoicing to prepare,
Directed by the Father's care,
To make the mission from the skies,
Involving worlds and destinies:

Then from the ring, a band of gold,
Like holy glowing aureole,
Rose, unsupported, overhead ;
Then smaller grew, as 'twere a thread,
High over all, expanding wide ;
Then its dimensions coincide
With that impressed upon the plain,
Where danced the joyous minstrel train.
The filmy line marked in the blue,
Stood still awhile, then nearer drew
The golden impress on the floor,
And sinking, sinking, sinking more,
Grew luminous as 'twas before.
The minstrels to the center hurried,
As doves, whom some alarm has flurried,
When the indentation on the plain
Received the glowing band again.
Awhile it glowed, as if it tested
The very imprint where it rested,
If by superior light it shone—
That steady, glowing, radiant zone.
But now its glory seemed to fade
Until a single thread, and laid

Upon the glowing stars, when through
The pavement sank, and from the view
Was lost !

Could eye have followed then
Its spirit-flight, the moment when
It had emerged from life and light,—
It had been seen again grow bright,
And so continue, till dense air,
That hangs about the earthly sphere,
So heavily, by pressure acted,
Upon its radiance, which contracted—
Until by mortal eyes unseen,
It sank to earth, pressed in the green ;
And flowers on that prairie wide
Bloom fresh as blown of magic pride ;
More musical the streamlets flow,
And everywhere a fresher glow
Upon the landscape wide is seen,
Which clothes itself with deeper green ;
And over all, the atmosphere
Is more inspiring everywhere !

The ring was lost ;—and every eye
But peered in vain, and wondered why
'Twas of such conformation made,
Or what mysterious spell were laid
Upon its beauty—what was meant,
If any signified intent.
" As herald it has gone before

And fallen on the other shore,
To make it brighter when you come,
And make it more akin to home,"
The Father said ; "but you must go
Near by the enchanted lakes, where grow
White withes, most pliable and rare,—
Them gather with exceeding care,
Which by those waters close you 'll find ;
And having brought them here, entwine,
And shape them with a skill divine,
Which I shall grant ; and you shall weave
Them round and round, and you shall wreath
Between them thread-light of some star,
And fashion all into a car
Of compass large and strong to bear
You safely from this realm, all fair,
To yonder world, for which we yearn,
And so insure your safe return."

Now where the spirit osiers grow,
Beside the enchanted lakes, they go
On hastening step with merry song,
Nor scarce they touch, as speed along,
The studded floor. And now they ply
The utmost tact and skill, and try
To find those osiers longest, best ;
And other properties they test,
As strength and flexibility.
Indeed, 'twere wonderful to see
How lithe and thread-like they should be !

And when they'd gathered all desired,
Sufficient for the car required,
They sat upon the magic shore
Of that strange sea, ne'er heard to roar ;
Yet as its waves so oft appear,
You'd even think that you might hear
Them rush, as if by tempest lashed,
Or in mad violence, seem dashed
Against uprising, rocky isle ;
Anon, its breast, like heaven's smile,
Lies tranquil ; now with gentle rise
Seems breathing air of Paradise.
They watch the shadows come and fly,
And transformations hurry by,
Which would, to inexperienced eye,
Prove meaningless ; but they descry
Wise lessons and of import high.

THE VISION.

Far in the distance ran the tide,
Whose convex surface seemed to glide,
Inclining down and down and down,
Until by shadowy distance grown,
It seemed to nether world to bear,
Its noiseless waters, dark and drear.
Now they on misty shore discerned
A warrior youth, who sought and yearned
To launch upon this beating sea,
And try its dark uncertainty.

Along the beach, at times, he wandered,
Almost unconscious what he pondered ;
Then would his anguished manner show,
His heart had felt no common blow,
When Chibiabos said : " My son "—
For two were seen where late but one—
" She whom you seek's already gone
Beyond this silent, beating tide—
Here she can never be your bride. "

The warrior started at the word,
Though he believed the message heard.

Love reasons not, nor does it see
What is impossibility ;—
It reasons, and it loses sight
Of premises, and hence, sees right,
However false conclusion drawn
Of what it sets its heart upon.

" O Chibiabos, " wild he cried,
" Allow I pass beyond this tide.
Oh, would that I it were that died !
'Twas on our cherished bridal day,
Some Manito took her away ! "

Then Chibiabos said, " My son,
Few are the spirits that have gone
More beautiful than she you seek,
Of virtues rare, so sweet and meek ;
But know you not, nor flesh, nor blood
Can pass this intervening flood ? "

At this, with anguished heart unstrung ;
He rushed, as if he would have flung
Himself into the heaving sea,—
But was unable. Then 'twas he
Fell down upon the dreary shore
And piteous begged—thus did implore :

“O Chibiabos, see ! I'm weak ;
But you are mighty. I bespeak—
Invoke your power. Oh, do not scorn
Me at your feet, crushed and forlorn !
My heart is bleeding, and you know
How faithful I have bent the bow.
By our Great Spirit do I swear,
Whate'er the task required, I'd dare.
Do I deserve this wretchedness ?
See ! how you have the power to bless !”
“ Arise, my son, it shall be so ;
But if beyond this tide you go,
Your body must be left behind,—
Your spirit for awhile refined,
Ere you can enter where the dead
Have gone—awhile, I said,
For soon you must return again,
Or, else, you plead to go in vain ;
And when from o'er the tide you come,
Your body here again resume. ”

The mode or feasibility
Of any task, whate'er it be,

Love seldom questions ; but the end,
To which it strives, its powers bend,
Disdaining what oppose between
It and the only object seen ;
Beyond uprising barrier flies
Nor fears what may withhold the prize ;
It sees the guerdon cherished, won,
Forgetful of all labor done,
As sight instanter grasps the sun,
Regardless of the distance run.

With hope and love bright in his eyes,
With quickened bound the warrior cries :
“ I will comply ! and should this sea,
Which rolls between my lost and me,
Beat with its fatal waters far
And quench the light of farthest star,
For her my soul would mock its breath,
And venture through the shades of death ! ”

And now the Spirit seeks to doff,
And Chibiabos helps put off
The body and all grosser weight,
That might prove hindrance, or abate
Its ready journey to life's realm—
That might the spirit overwhelm
In its strange passage as it flies.
Now quivering on the shore he lies,
And gazing o'er the tide, he sighs—
“ ' Twill soon be o'er. ”

His eyelids fall.

And gasping, frees his spirit's thrall,
Which, rising for a moment, lent
Some vague wish for its tenement.
And now upon the buoyant sea,
It followed its convexity
Up, round, and up, to where the green
And beautiful and bright are seen
Beyond the darkness, clear outlined.
'Twas there a body, all refined,
It seemed, awaited and prepared,
Fit organism, such as shared
By those who walk the golden floor,—
Imperishable evermore.

It was the warrior youth who stood,
As seen beyond the dismal flood.
Across this isle (for isle it seemed),
Another sea's bright waters gleamed,
To which he pressed.—Another sea!
He wanders in perplexity—
He finds no one; but is he foiled,
And lost the hope for which he toiled?
It shall not be. He calls her name,—
To hear faint echoes call the same;
And looking on the crystal tide
Beholds, of sudden, near his side,
Moored safe to beach, a white canoe
Of pure white stone! At once, he knew
'Twas there for him. He grasps the oar
And strikes the water to the shore!

Athwart the sea it seemed to fly,—
When lo ! another is close by
With heavenly passenger to ply
The magic oar. Oh joy ! 'tis she
For whom he dared the unknown sea.
Two stone canoes were soon aside !
And love united groom and bride—
Their answering song flew o'er the tide,
And timely fell the oars they plied.

He.

Long my burdened heart and weary
Pined thine absence ; but how sweet,
After hours so dark and dreary,
Thus my angel lost to meet !
All I languished,
All I anguished,
Oh, how bountiful repaid !

She.

Long my lonely heart has waited,
Waiting here by life's green shore,
Till a breeze came to me freighted
With the tidings, you were o'er.
I fled to meet you,
Embrace and greet you,—
Lend a loving hand to aid.

Both.

With hearts full of glee,

On life's buoyant sea,
How sweet 'tis to be!

Merrily,
Cheerily,
Onward we move!

On yonder bright shore,
Shall we ever part more?
Earth's sighings then o'er?

Nor borrow
Of sorrow,—
Forever to love.

The shore was gained—the vision flew,
The shadows lifted, and the blue,
Expanding clear above the sea,
Revealed the lake as wont to be.
'Twas not as long as here related,
The minstrels by these waters waited;
For all upon the mind had burst,
Like graphic scenes, sometimes coerced,
Upon the memory full and true,
Of life long past in swift review
By threatened death; so came and flew
Before their eyes the enraptured vision
Of this enchanted lake-elysian;
And reading, wondered such could mean
Interpretation of the scene.

They quickly rose, nor longer tarried;
But hastening with the withes they carried,

They sought the starry floor again,—
Bright center-piece of all the plain,
In which the golden mold was laid,
And where the car was ordered made.
The Father said, "Here, frame the car
Around, upon this blazing star ;
And through the meshes weave a thread
Of golden light that it shall shed,—
'Twill give you power, descend or rise,
To reach the earth, regain the skies."
Obedient to the Father's will,
At once, they hasten to fulfill
The joyous task—the car prepare,
Which soon such precious freight shall bear.

About the blazing star they drew
The withes around, and through and through.
They passed them this way and the other,
And tightly drew them close together.
Each holds a withe by farthest end,
And dance around the central star ;
And fast the plaited osiers blend,
And build the wondrous magic car.

Now in and out,
Around, about,
Now they reverse
Oft-time their course ;
As, on the May-day we have seen,
Around the May-pole on the green,
Young maidens, in their merriest glee,

Would sing and dance so happily ;
While blend the plaited colors fast,
Till shortening ribbons brought at last
The beauties to the ribboned pole—
Who, turning soon unwound the whole.
Thus flew the minstrels round the ring,
Until the inwrought osiers bring
Them close together in the center ;

When other osiers they prepare,
Which deftly, magically enter
While they 're retreating from the star !

Now in and out,

Around, about

The wicker car,

Around the star,

Grew fast with wondrous threads of gold,
Which woven meshes fast enfold ;
Threads so mysteriously connected—
Threads from the blazing star reflected—
Threads which so purely shone, evincible
That they were drawn of Life's great principle.
Chryseis in her captive home
Ne'er wove upon the Grecian loom
A fabric wrought with greater care,
For son of Atreus' race, though rare
Her skill, exceeding all compare ;
Nor Persian art could hope to try,
In wonders of embroidery,
Such woven threads successfully.

Now in and out,

Around, about,
They intertwine,
And so combine
With osier in alternate place,
Imparting beauty, power and grace ;
And now the withes weave up and down,
Gyrating from the star to crown,
And there, uniting round with all,
Roll an inspired astragal,
All set with blazing berries bright,
That flashed in variegated light,—
About, around,
All up and down,
Until the car,
Built on the star,
Stood all complete.

Then voices rang
In merry shouts and songs they sang—
The labor o'er. The Father's hand
Makes gesture which all understand ;
For leaped they in the wondrous car,
Now scarcely pressing on the star,
Then rising from the studded floor,
Twelve messengers of life it bore
Up through the noiseless tide afar.

Now close observance might discern
The glowing mold appear to burn,
O'er which the twelve so lately flew,

And where the aureole passed through.
It then grew dimmer, and a line
Appeared, and lay, as to define
Some measured purpose had in view.
The Father said—and though the word,
So softly said you scarce had heard—
“Swing down!” When instant swung the door,
The part encompassed in the floor—
There, opening down from life and day,
The dark abyss unfathomed lay;
And now, descending from above,
As gentle as the wafted dove
From Ararat had ever flown,
Life’s nestling messengers came down,
And through the opening made, denoted,
The laden vessel downward floated,
As it had been a gossamer
Just blown upon the autumn’s air.
And still ’twas wafted, down, and down,
Till no returning echo sound
Sends back the happy chorus-strain,
In which all join again, again.
Still on, the drifting car went on,
Till in the distance, far beyond,
The door up-swung, when all seemed dim,
Till far ahead along the rim
Of what appeared a lengthened coast,
A faint light shone and then was lost,—
Appeared again more bright, remained,
And larger as the vessel gained

Upon the distance intervening—
Twelve anxious, eager hearts were leaning,
Out-looking, wondering at the sight,
Till all appeared a world of light.

It was the roseate East and portal
That opens up to realms immortal !
In upward flight to shores of bliss,
The spirit furls its wings in this
And rests till ordered to resume
Its journey and possess its home.
They rested here.—'Twas meet should be,
For now they know humanity—
However, closely may combine
With it the eternal and Divine—
Partakes of all beneath the skies,
And weight of man's infirmities.

And while they rested near the car,
Uprose the glorious Morning Star—
“How beautiful!” at once they cried—
“And you!” she smiling, too, replied,
“From bright Ponemah come afar?
But whither borne in mystic car?
You know this home is all my own,
And pleased I greet you from my throne.”
“We journey to a world below,
As messengers of life we go ;
We would assuage its gloom and strife
And bear to it eternal life.”

“What glorious mission this of thine,
Exceeding in importance mine ;
For, I my daily circuit run,
As harbinger before the sun,—
As you are messengers of love,
Sent by the Master from above,
An earnest of the life to come,
Prepayment on the eternal home !
Quite joyful it would be to me,
If my companions you would be
As far as you may journey west.”
The car uprose and came abreast,
And much each wondering at the mystery,
Inquired of each the other's history.

To theirs the Morning Star replied :
“Once on the earth, when none beside,
Except an only much-loved brother,
I lived alone. Nor e'en a mother
Was there to give me her caress.
My brother, infant then ; for less
Than eighth returning spring had come,
When oft and far he'd go from home ;
And when o'er peaks the moon shone bright,
He'd not return till morning light,
But 'long the mountain tops, where creep
No shadows, and where rocks are steep,
He'd dance and sing the whole night through ;
Nor with advancing years he grew
In stature ; and yet he became

A hunter of no common fame ;
A strange, mysterious power had he :
At will, invisible could be—
From him, the Puck-wudg-ininee ;
And 'long the streams, and on the hill,
The little men do vanish still.
When left alone, so much I'd brood
O'er my unhappy solitude
That not unheeded was my prayer,
To be relieved of lonely care,
That this the roseate East, my home,
Has my own dwelling-place become."

When thus had said the Morning Star,
The wafted messengers afar,
Soon bore down, down, through clouds and air—
Sank down to earth, upon the green,
Just where the aureole, unseen,
Had fallen on the prairie there !

Thou freighted car of life, all hail !
Come welcome from the other shore !
What blessed hopes that never fail,
Thou bring'st from that all-plenteous store !
What blessings for all climes and nations,
To cheer man's heart, direct his love
And give him noblest aspirations
To open up a life above !
What wondrous love is here displayed,
When all in hopeless gloom seemed hurled,

The Master of all life had made
Such rich provision for the world !

Now disembarked upon the sward,
The twelve with watchful eye on guard,
Tripped 'round in circle as before,
And sang as on the golden floor,
While floods of life-waves seem to pour
And radiate the very earth ;
And animation, in new birth,
Where desert wastes and spots defiled,—
Exulting in its victory, smiled ;
And where death-stillness reigned but late
Began with wakening life pulsate
The very rocks and caves and air,
Till life—life—life was everywhere,
Renewing earth throughout her sphere !

Now while they danced upon the green,
Again the aureole was seen,
Above their heads, a moment glowing—
Then rising, fading, going, going,
Till through the doorway of the plain
It lay upon the stars again ;—
They, passing joyous round the ring,
This song of life were heard to sing :

Burst forth in sweeter praise, ye fountains,
Than ever been !
Awake to life, ye plains and mountains,
Be clothed in green !

Let blooming Spring with crystal showers,
And smiles of joy make glad the flowers ;
And grant on earth some golden hours
Like heaven serene !

The earth has slept, it shall awake,
And with its clay
The soul of man, aroused, partake
Of holier ray !
And thus infused be glorified ;—
Above the chill of death shall ride
On life's uplifting, throbbing tide
To endless day !

When streams of life so freely rise,
Can man refuse
To look through them beyond the skies,
And make excuse ?
As heaven with countless stars is gemmed,
So man, by admonitions hemmed
On every side, must stand condemned,
If wrong he choose.

Hope smiles upon the flowing streams—
That steadfast friend—
When anguish wrings the heart, its beams
Will make amend ;
And faith will fix the heart above
All earthly toils and storms, and prove

These richest blessings, born of love,
Shall never end !

The song was wafted far and free,
All nature joined in harmony,
And hopeful smiled through joyful tears ;
O'er death was gained the victory,
Proclaimed by tongue of prophecy
Should come through deeply shadowed years.
The mission done, prepared to rise,
The twelve stand looking to the skies,
And upward drawn, the magic car
Floats free above the earth afar.
Down swings the door of yon bright plain,
Upclosing, shuts them in again !
But they return, as they have done
Through many ages that have run ;
And still the life-streams copious pour,
To bless the world from that bright shore,
And shall continue evermore.

END.

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